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ABSTRACT

This book tells the story of one year in the life of a juvenile court classroom. The Chicago (Illinois) juvenile court is the largest site of incarcerated youth in the world, and was the first state court provided exclusively for children. The experiences of the detention center school, focusing on the classroom of "Mr. B.," a committed teacher, tell the stories of urban youth who have committed crimes and the environments that brought them to the detention center. The Juvenile Court was intended to be a "kind and just parent" to its wards, but the gap between the crises faced by urban youth and the capacity of the court to address them continues to grow. The juvenile court system is not the kind and just parent it was intended to be, but in spite of its shortcomings, the detention center's teachers persevere in efforts to help these children. It is argued that the standard to apply when we think of justice for children is, is it good enough for my kids? Considerations about children in the juvenile justice system cannot be in the abstract. (SLD)

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